

MEMORANDUM

July 24, 2017

TO: Jeremy Gunn

FROM: Doug Horne

SUBJECT: Rationale for Possible Subpoena of Jerrol Custer

1. Possible reasons for issuing a subpoena to Jerrol Custer revolve primarily around records related to the x-rays taken of President Kennedy at the 11/22/63 autopsy performed at Bethesda NNMC. Since we have reason to believe that Mr. Custer is the individual who actually positioned the portable x-ray machine prior to each x-ray taken of the President's body, exposed the x-ray film, and couriered it to-and-from the developing room and the morgue, he should be able to assist ARRB with clarification of records as follows:

- a. The number of x-rays taken of President Kennedy's skull at the autopsy on 11/22/63 is in doubt; Jerrol Custer should be asked how many separate series of skull x-rays were taken (i.e., one or two), and how many total x-rays of the skull were taken.
- b. Possible inconsistencies exist between the HSCA deposition testimony of Navy Radiologist John Ebersole, and the apparent wounds depicted in the 3 JFK skull x-rays now in the National Archives; unfortunately, Dr. Ebersole is now deceased, so the next best avenue for resolving these possible inconsistencies is to interview Mr. Custer, the lead x-ray technician who actually exposed x-ray film at the JFK autopsy under Dr. Ebersole's supervision, took that film upstairs for developing, and returned it to the morgue during the autopsy. Jerrol Custer could be asked to describe the appearance of the skull x-rays he exposed and returned from the developing room on 11/22/63, and could then be shown JFK skull x-rays no. 1, 2 and 3 in the National Archives, and could be asked whether x-rays no. 1, 2 and 3 are consistent in appearance with the x-rays he exposed, and returned to the morgue following developing on 11/22/63.
- c. There is reason to believe that JFK autopsy x-rays no. 4, 5 and 6 at the National Archives were not taken with a portable x-ray machine (i.e., the unit in the Bethesda morgue), but with a higher resolution x-ray machine such as that found permanently mounted in an x-ray laboratory; Mr. Custer could be asked what he knows about the provenance of these three x-rays described as loose (unattached) skull fragments of President Kennedy. There is reason to believe Mr. Custer was directly involved in

the creation of these 3 x-rays, and that he could therefore resolve questions which exist about the circumstances under which they were created.

- d. Questions which exist about the images of apparent metallic bullet fragments in JFK skull x-rays 1, 2 and 3 might be raised with Mr. Custer; after he is shown subject x-rays at the Archives, he could be asked if the large, unusually radio-luminescent metallic fragment in x-ray no. 1, and the apparent fragment "trail" in x-rays 2 and 3, are consistent with what he observed on 11/22/63.
- e. Questions which exist about the two pencil lines overdrawn on x-ray no. 2 (right lateral view of the skull) might be addressed to Mr. Custer: specifically, whether he witnessed the drawing of these markings on the x-ray, or saw the x-ray after the lines had been overdrawn. If he observed these two lines on the film on 11/22/63, he may be able to provide first-hand knowledge which would clarify who drew the lines, the circumstances under which they were drawn, and their meaning.
- f. The autopsy protocol (CE 387) does not provide details about the timing and sequence of events (such as the taking of x-rays and photographs) at the autopsy, and the HSCA's 1977 interview of Drs. Humes and Boswell did not focus on procedural questions related to the taking of x-rays; since Dr. Ebersole is now deceased, his lead x-ray technician, Mr. Custer, is now the best source in position to clarify the record of the autopsy in this area.
- g. It may be desirable to ask Mr. Custer to authenticate the autopsy photographs, as well as the x-rays, since ARRB has reason to believe he was present for the majority of, if not the entire, autopsy.

2. ARRB has attempted to obtain Mr. Custer's voluntary cooperation, but to this point he has chosen not to cooperate with our requests for a voluntary telephone interview.

